

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10
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R 041147Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7698
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 3203

E.O. 11652: GDSTAGS: IR PEPR
SUBJ: ANOTHER TIFF OVER NAME OF PERSIAN GULF

1. LOCAL MEDIA ON APRIL 3 NOTED WITH SATISFACTION THAT MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR LONG DISTANCE COMMUNICATION AGREED IN GENEVA LAST WEEKEND THAT NOMENCLATURE "PERSIAN GULF" SHOULD BE RETAINED IN CONFERENCE DOCUMENTATION. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, MAIN CULPRITS SUGGESTING OMISSION OF TERM "PERSIAN GULF" WERE SAUDI ARABIA, SYRIA, ALGERIA, LIBYA, KUWAIT AND "SOME OTHER NON-ARAB COUNTRIES". APPARENTLY THE GOI REP THREATENED IRANIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM THE CONFERENCE IF AN EARLIER DECISION TO REFER TO THAT BODY OF WATER ONLY BY MEANS OF ITS LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE WAS IMPLEMENTED.

2. LENGTHY EDITORIAL IN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TEHRAN JOURNAL CITED MESOPOTAMIAN USE OF NAME "PERSIAN GULF" AS HISTORICAL EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF GOI POSITION. JOURNAL
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CHARACTERIZED THOSE WHO WISH TO OMIT NAME AS "TROUBLEMAKERS" AND LUMPED THEM WITH "THE NEW COLONIALISTS AND THE UNHOLY ALLIANCE OF RED AND BLACK REACTIONARIES", TERMING THEIR ACTION A "HYPOCRITICAL PLOT TO CREATE UNEASE BETWEEN IRAN AND NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES IN THE REGION".

3. COMMENT: RECENT CONFERENCE TOUCHED ONE OF MOST SENSITIVE

MULTI-LATERAL ISSUES IN GOI FOREIGN POLICY LEXICON. ANY
THREAT TO MODIFY GEOGRAPHIC NAME OF PERSIAN GULF BRINGS
IMMEDIATE, PREDICTABLE REACTION FROM GOI. IT MAY BE
RECALLED THAT SIMILAR WAR OF WORDS OCCURRED IN 1976 OVER
A PROPOSED "ARABIAN GULF NEWS AGENCY", FINALLY DYING DOWN
WHEN A COMPROMISE "GULF COUNTRIES NEWS AGENCY" WAS CREATED.
IN FACT, WE UNDERSTAND (OFFICIAL) PARS NEW AGENCY
DIRECTOR JAFFARIAN JUST ATTENDED THE FORMAL INAUGURATION
OF THAT NEWS AGENCY IN MANAMA.

4. IN THIS CASE, MFA OFFICIALS TELL US THEY WERE SURPRISED
TO SEE SAUDI ARABIAN REP TAKING THE LEAD INSTEAD
OF MORE RADICAL ARABS. THEY SUPPOSE IT HAD SOMETHING TO
DO WITH INDIVIDUAL SAUDI REP AT THE MEETING. HOWEVER,
SAUDI AMB WAS SUBSEQUENTLY CALLED IN TO MFA HERE
AND REPORTEDLY GAVE THE CUSTOMARY EXPRESSION OF REGRET OVER
THE INCIDENT, PROMISING TO TRY TO SEE IT WAS NOT REPEATED.
SULLIVAN

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NNN

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